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Washington, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) issued the following statement on the House floor, regarding H.Res. 1206. This resolution commemorates the victims who died in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on April 19, 1995.

"Madam Speaker, today I rise to remember the victims of the 1995 terrorist attack in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people. This act of American terrorism was committed by a man who viewed the federal government as such a threat that it justified mass murder.

"I applaud my colleague from Oklahoma for her resolution because it serves as a reminder that right-wing, anti-government extremist groups are on the rise today.

"Only two weeks ago members of a so-called Christian militia in Michigan were arrested by the FBI for plotting to kill law enforcement officers in the hopes of inciting an anti-government uprising.

"A national civil rights organization has documented a growing number of hate groups in America and states they are 'driven largely by an angry backlash against non-white immigration ... the economic meltdown, and the climb to power of an African American president.'

"Or, in one word - racism.

"Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center states, 'Individuals associated with the Patriot movement during its 1990s heyday produced an enormous amount of violence, most dramatically the Oklahoma City bombing...'

"Today, Mr. Potok states, 'as the movement has exploded, so has the reach of its ideas, aided and abetted by commentators and politicians...'

"Only last month a Fox News commentator, with Members of Congress next to him, rallied a Tea Party crowd by disparaging Congress and calling the crowd 'all these Tim McVeigh wannabes here' to the crowds cheers and applause.

"When Members of Congress compare health care legislation to 'government tyranny,' 'socialism,' or 'totalitarianism' - in the hopes of scoring political points is like pouring gas on the fire of extremism.

"The Members of this House Democrats and Republicans - have a duty and an obligation to end the dangerous name-calling that can only inspire the extremist militias and phony patriots.

"In the most free, prosperous and greatest democracy on earth it is time to return to a civil, decent debate of public policy.

"I don't want another 'Oklahoma City' to ever take place again.

"Just as we would not give aid and comfort to al-Qaeda, let us not allow the words of elected leaders give comfortable excuses to extremists bent on violence.

"Words have power for both good and evil. I implore my colleagues to temper their rhetoric and not allow the words of a Member of Congress to be used by any violent militia or hate filled phony-patriots to perpetrate violence.

"The victims of the Oklahoma City bombing were women at work, men waiting in line for government services, and children in a day care center. Families were torn apart and struggled to heal. A community was devastated but is again filled with hope and memories.

"I hope with this resolution every Member of Congress will reflect upon the victims of Oklahoma

City as well as our duty as elected federal leaders in a proud and free country.

"Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks, and I yield back my time."

Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.

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